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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE GHOST RIDER®

TO BANISH A GHOST!

GET THIS THING AIRBORNE, BLAST IT! BEFORE THAT WEIRDO IN THE FLAMIN' SKULL-SUIT RIDES RIGHT UP OUR TAIL!
WE HEAR YA, AL!
BDAM! BDAM! BDAM!
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DON PERLIN ---------- ARTIST
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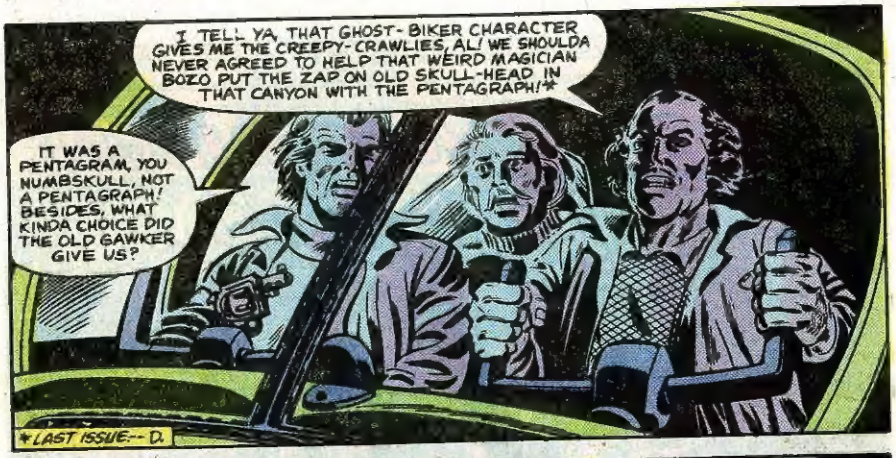
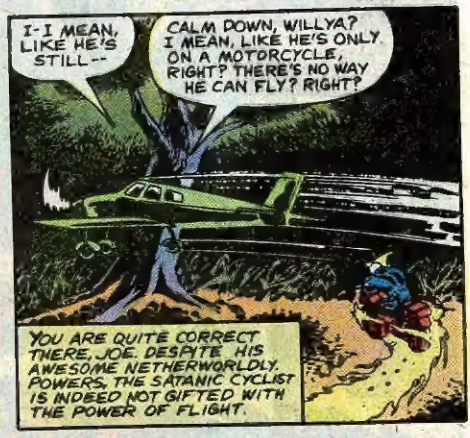

I TELL YA, THAT GHOST-BIKER CHARACTER GIVES ME THE CREEPY-CRAWLIES, AL! WE SHOULDA NEVER AGREED TO HELP THAT WEIRD MAGICIAN BOZO PUT THE ZAP ON OLD SKULL-HEAD IN THAT CANYON WITH THE PENTAGRAPH!*
IT WAS A PENTAGRAM, YOU NUMBSKULL, NOT A PENTAGRAPH! BESIDES, WHAT KINDA CHOICE DID THE OLD GAWKER GIVE US?
*LAST ISSUE-- D.


I-I MEAN, LIKE HE'S STILL--
CALM DOWN, WILLYA? I MEAN, LIKE HE'S ONLY ON A MOTORCYCLE, RIGHT? THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN FLY? RIGHT?
YOU ARE QUITE CORRECT THERE, JOE. DESPITE HIS AWESOME NETHERWORLDLY POWERS, THE SATANIC CYCLIST IS INDEED NOT GIFTED WITH THE POWER OF FLIGHT.

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WH-WHAT IS IT, JOE BOY? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
T-THERE'S SOMETHIN' GONE SCREWY WITH THE PLANE, AL! SOMETHIN' DRAGGIN' HER DOWN!
WE'RE ON FIRE! W-WE'RE GOIN' DOWN--
H-HELP! SAVE ME! I DON'T WANTA DIE!!
KA-RAAASSSH!
AS THE DAZED AND PANIC-STRICKEN CRIMINALS STAGGER FROM THE WRECKAGE OF THEIR DEMOLISHED AIRCRAFT, SKELETAL HANDS REACH OUT OF THE BLACKNESS TO SEAR THEIR SOULS WITH ICY BLASTS OF FRIGID HELLFIRE...
NO! N-NO! PL--
GHAAAAA!
AND THEN, AS GRIMLY AS HE CAME, THE GHOST RIDER DEPARTS, LEAVING BEHIND HIM THREE HOLLOW-EYED ADVERSARIES TO AWAIT THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF THE STATE POLICE...

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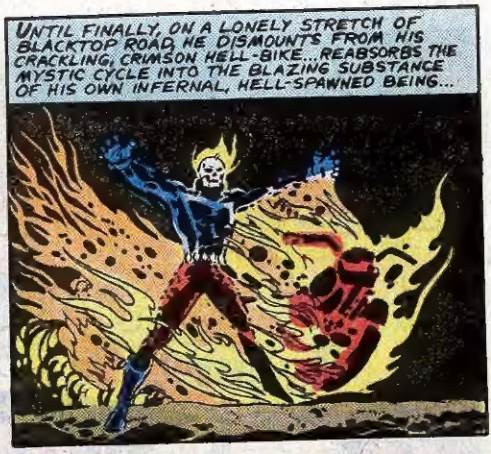
UNTIL FINALLY, ON A LONELY STRETCH OF BLACKTOP ROAD, HE DISMOUNTS FROM HIS CRACKLING, CRIMSON HELL-BIKE... REABSORBS THE MYSTIC CYCLE INTO THE BLAZING SUBSTANCE OF HIS OWN INFERNAL, HELL-SPAWNED BEING...

...INTO THE MORTAL ALTERNATE IDENTITY OF THE FAR-FAMED MOTORCYCLE STUNT-RIDER TURNED WANDERER NAMED JOHNNY BLAZE...
WHEW! W-WHAT AN ORDEAL IT IS!

ASK THE AVERAGE PERSON, HE'D PROBABLY TELL YOU IT'D BE FUN CHANGING FROM AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING INTO A DEMON BIKER AND BACK AGAIN! BUT, BOY, THEY SHOULD JUST TRY IT!
BIG HERBI TAVER
BIG HERBIE'S TAVERN

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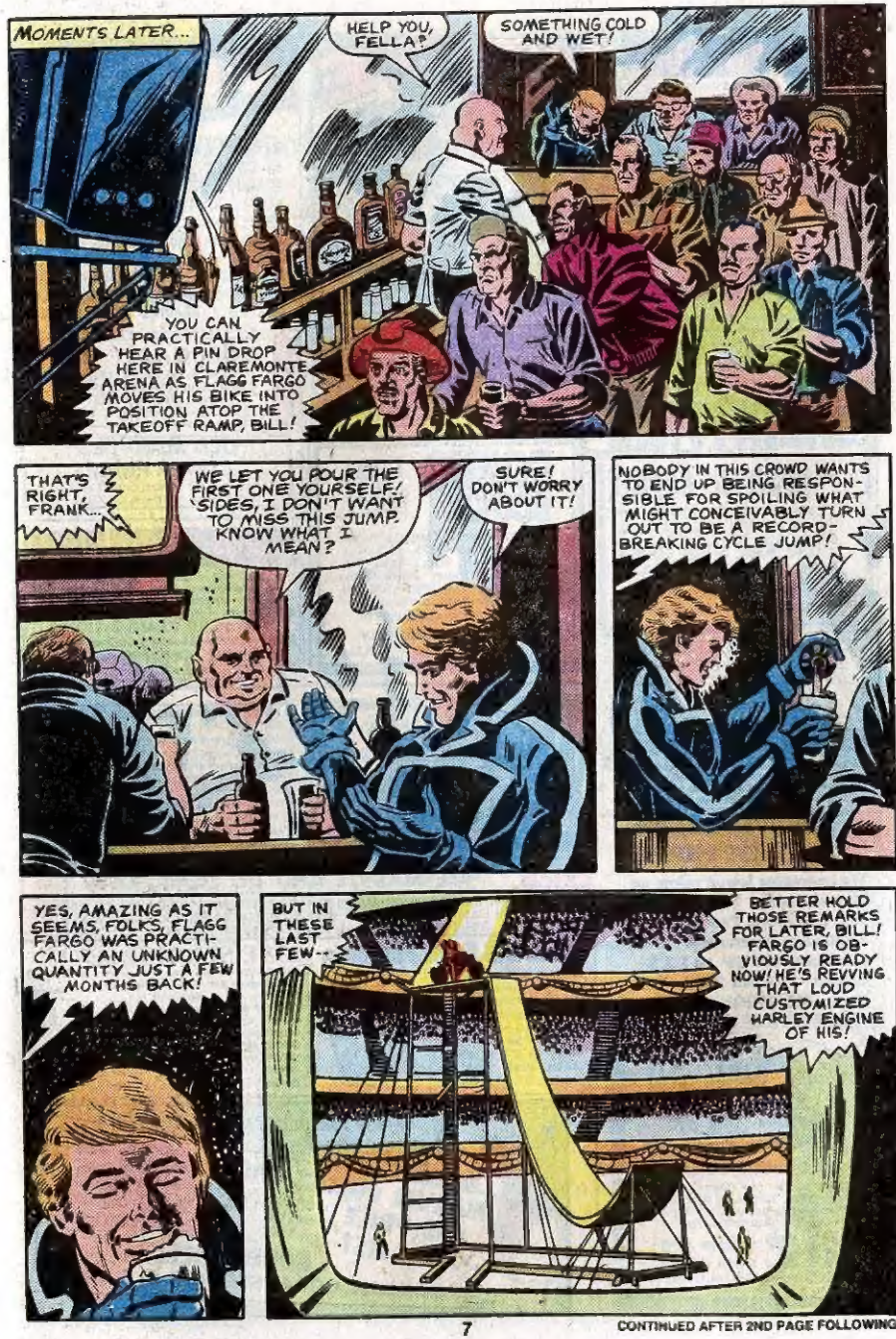
MOMENTS LATER...
HELP YOU, FELLA?
SOMETHING COLD AND WET!
YOU CAN PRACTICALLY HEAR A PIN DROP HERE IN CLAREMONTE ARENA AS FLAGG FARGO MOVES HIS BIKE INTO POSITION ATOP THE TAKEOFF RAMP, BILL!
THAT'S RIGHT, FRANK...
WE LET YOU POUR THE FIRST ONE YOURSELF! 'SIDES, I DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS JUMP. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
SURE! DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
NOBODY IN THIS CROWD WANTS TO END UP BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR SPOILING WHAT MIGHT CONCEIVABLY TURN OUT TO BE A RECORD-BREAKING CYCLE JUMP!
YES, AMAZING AS IT SEEMS, FOLKS, FLAGG FARGO WAS PRACTICALLY AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY JUST A FEW MONTHS BACK!
BUT IN THESE LAST FEW--
BETTER HOLD THOSE REMARKS FOR LATER, BILL! FARGO IS OBVIOUSLY READY NOW! HE'S REVVING THAT LOUD CUSTOMIZED HARLEY ENGINE OF HIS!

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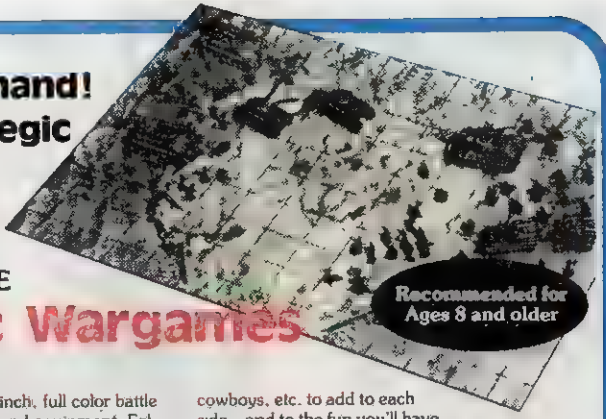

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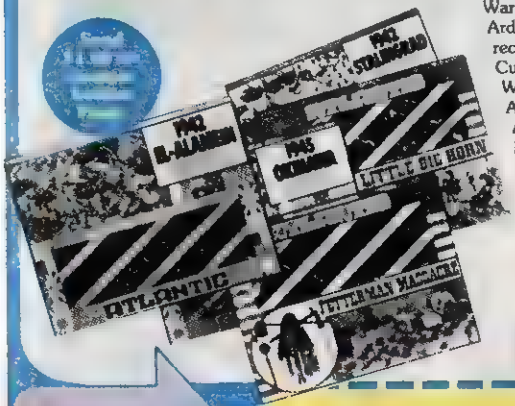

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IT SOUNDS JUST LIKE A SNARLING LION, WOULDN'T YOU SAY THAT, FRANK?
YES, IT SURE DOES, BILL! NOW LET'S WATCH FLAGG FARGO HE'S ROARING DOWN THAT TAKE OFF RAMP LIKE A BAT OUT OF--! WHOOPS! WE'RE NOT REALLY SUPPOSED TO SAY THAT, ARE WE, BILL?
NO, WE'RE NOT, FRANK! WAIT! THERE HE GOES! HE'S ALREADY INTO HIS FIRST SOMERSAULT, FRANK!
INDEED HE IS, BILL!
AS YOU WELL KNOW, BILL, ONLY ONE OTHER RIDER IN STUNT-CYCLE HISTORY HAS EVER PERFORMED THIS FEAT SUCCESSFULLY, AND THAT WAS NONE OTHER THAN DAREDEVIL STUNT-BIKER JOHNNY BLAZE!
FLAGG'S INTO HIS SECOND SOMERSAULT NOW, FRANK!
COME TO THINK OF IT, BILL, WE HAVEN'T SEEN MUCH OF JOHNNY BLAZE ON THE CYCLE CIRCUIT LATELY, HAVE WE?
WE SURE HAVEN'T, FRANK! MAYBE IT'S AS FLAGG HIMSELF HAS CLAIMED SO OFTEN ON THIS TOUR--
--MAYBE BLAZE IS SIMPLY AFRAID TO--
THERE IT IS, BILL! HE'S DONE IT! HE'S COMPLETED THE TRIPLE! HE'S PULLING OUT OF IT!

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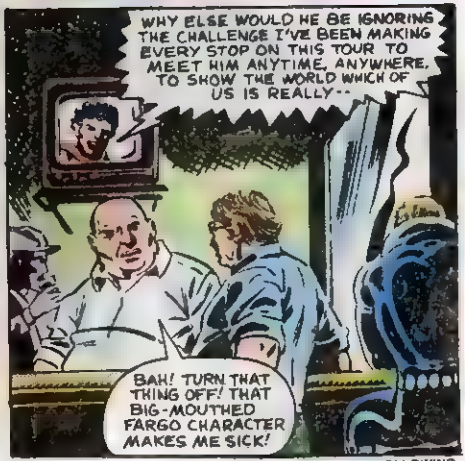
THE CROWD IS GOING WILD, BILL! THE APPLAUSE IS DEAFENING AS THESE CYCLE FANS HAVE JUST WITNESSED THE FIRST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED TRIPLE SOMERSAULT SINCE JOHNNY BLAZE FIRST DEBUTED THIS ASTOUNDING FEAT IN THE SALT LAKE CITY MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO!
NOW WE SWITCH YOU DOWN TO THE ARENA FLOOR WHERE OUR OWN CLARA HENRY IS HOPING TO GARNER A FEW WORDS WITH THE HERO OF THE HOUR! COME IN, CLARA!
FARGO

HERE I AM, BILL AND FRANK, WITH MASTER STUNT-CYCLIST FLAGG FARGO!
TELL ME, MR. FARGO. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE ONLY MAN IN HISTORY, EXCEPT FOR THE LEGENDARY JOHNNY BLAZE, EVER TO SOAR OFF THE TAKEOFF RAMP INTO AN ASTOUNDING TRIPLE SOMERSAULT?
WELL, LET ME GET RIGHT TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER, SWEETHEART! JOHNNY BLAZE IS THROUGH! BECAUSE FROM NOW ON, INSTEAD OF JUST MATCHING HIS STUNT RECORDS, I AIM TO BEAT EVERY ONE OF THEM!

I'VE SAID FROM THE START, AND I'M SAYING IT AGAIN, JOHNNY BLAZE IS A SISSY! I COULD BEAT HIM IN STUNT-CYCLING WITH ONE ARM TIED BEHIND MY BACK! I KNOW IT, YOU KNOW IT, AND JOHNNY BLAZE MUST KNOW IT, TOO!


WHY ELSE WOULD HE BE IGNORING THE CHALLENGE I'VE BEEN MAKING EVERY STOP ON THIS TOUR TO MEET HIM ANYTIME, ANYWHERE, TO SHOW THE WORLD WHICH OF US IS REALLY--
BAH! TURN THAT THING OFF! THAT BIG-MOUTHED FARGO CHARACTER MAKES ME SICK!

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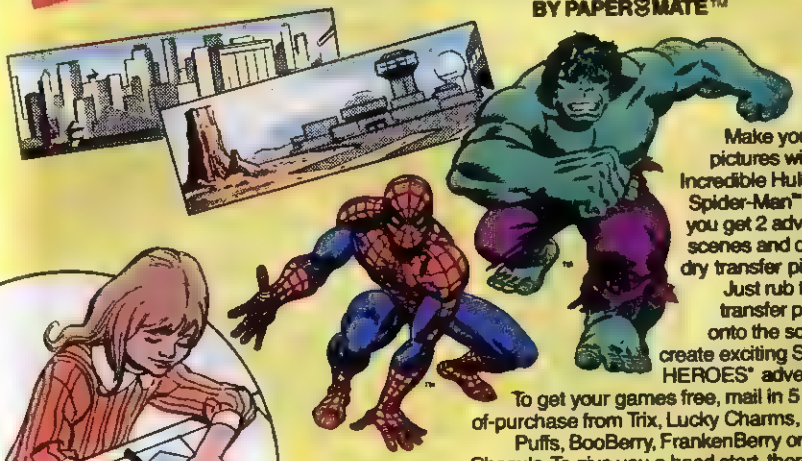

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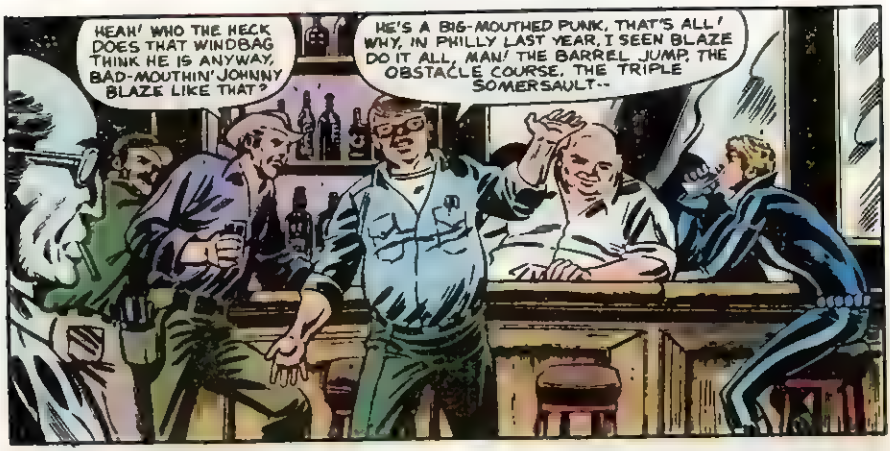
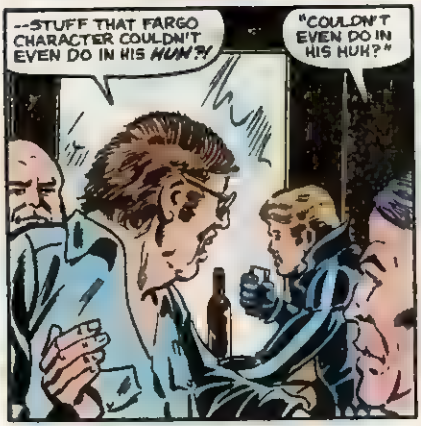
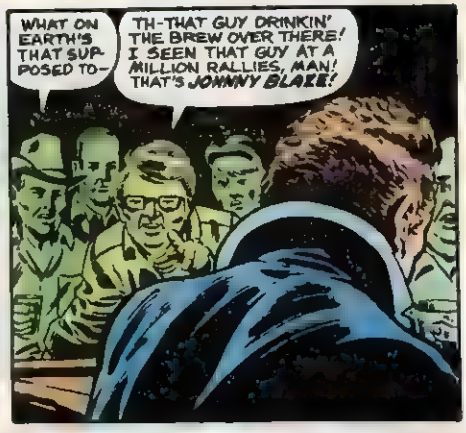
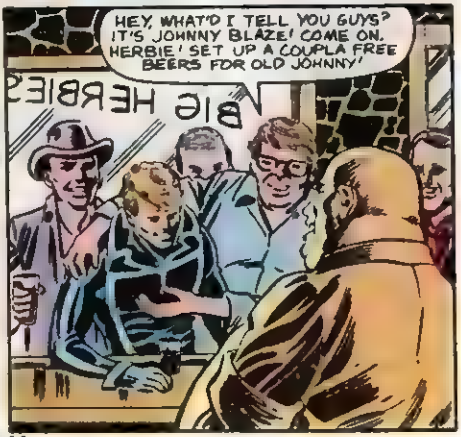

HEAH! WHO THE HECK DOES THAT WINDBAG THINK HE IS ANYWAY, BAD-MOUTHIN' JOHNNY BLAZE LIKE THAT?
HE'S A BIG-MOUTHED PUNK, THAT'S ALL! WHY, IN PHILLY LAST YEAR, I SEEN BLAZE DO IT ALL, MAN! THE BARREL JUMP, THE OBSTACLE COURSE, THE TRIPLE SOMERSAULT--




WHAT ON EARTH'S THAT SUPPOSED TO-
TH-THAT GUY DRINKIN' THE BREW OVER THERE! I SEEN THAT GUY AT A MILLION RALLIES, MAN! THAT'S JOHNNY BLAZE!

WHAT!? ARE YOU SURE?
HEY, MISTER! TELL THESE GUYS I AIN'T CRAZY! YOU'RE JOHNNY BLAZE, RIGHT?
YOU'RE NOT CRAZY FRIEND! YOU GOT IT RIGHT! I'M BLAZE!



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HEY, JOHNNY! YOU'RE NOT GONNA LET THAT RAT-FINK FLAGG FARGO GO AROUND MAKIN' MUD OUTA YOUR NAME ALL OVER THE U.S.A. ARE YA? I MEAN, YOU'RE GONNA GO OUT THERE AND WHIPSAW HIS REAR END FOR 'IM RIGHT?
YEAH! SURE HE IS! JOHNNY'S GONNA GO OUT THERE AND MAKE THAT SISSY FARGO CHARACTER LOOK LIKE THE PITIFUL PUNK HE IS!
RIGHT, JOHNNY?
NOW LOOK, FELLAS! I REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR FAITH IN ME! HONEST! BUT I'VE BEEN OUT OF WORK ON THE ROAD NOW A LONG TIME! I DON'T EVEN HAVE A BIKE.
NO BIKE?
HOW YOU BEEN GETTIN' AROUND FROM PLACE TO PLACE IF YOU AIN'T GOT NO BIKE?
I'VE BEEN RIDING WITH A FRIEND
HEY! WAIT A MINUTE! IT DON'T MATTER IF HE AIN'T GOT NO BIKE!
WE GOT A LOCAL SPORTS CLUB, JOHNNY! WE GOT A TREASURY AND EVERYTHING! ALL US GUYS, WE'LL JUST TAKE OUT THE MONEY AND BLOW YOU TO ANY KINDA BIKE YOU WANT, OKAY?
WELL, I--
YEAH, SURE WE WILL!
WHAT THE HECK? WHAT WE SPEND ON THE BIKE WE'LL MORE N MAKE BACK ON THE BETS WE'LL PUT ON JOHNNY TO TROMP THIS FARGO CHARACTER!
C'MON, JOHNNY! YOU GOTTA DO IT, MAN! YOU'RE OUR HERO, Y'KNOW!

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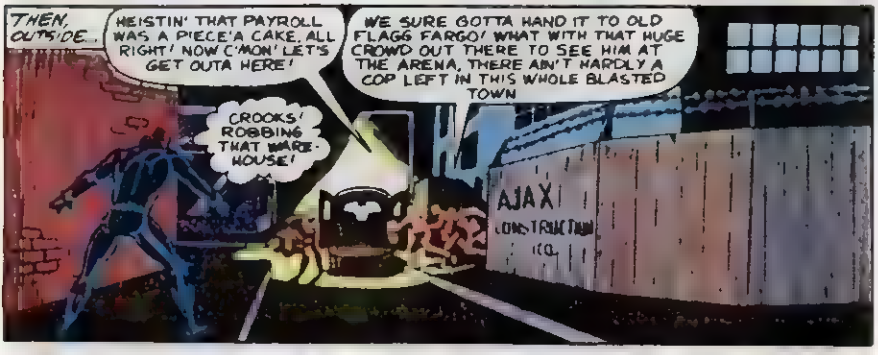
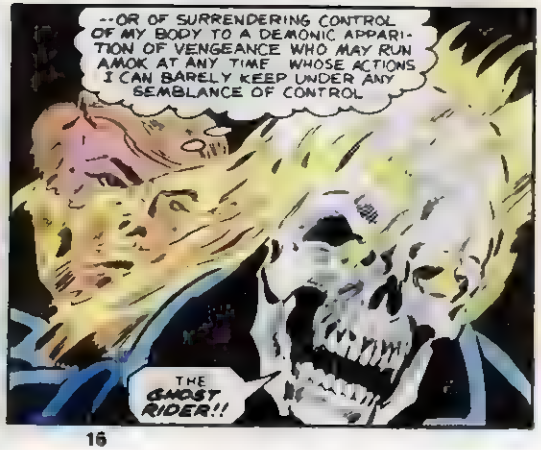
ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO IT! THE WAY YOU GUYS'VE PUT IT, HOW WOULD I BE ABLE TO HOLD MY HEAD UP AROUND HERE IF I DIDN'T?
YAHOO! MOVE OVER, FLAGG FARGO! HERE COMES JOHNNY BLAZE!


THEN, OUTSIDE..
HEISTIN' THAT PAYROLL WAS A PIECE'A CAKE, ALL RIGHT! NOW C'MON! LET'S GET OUTA HERE!
CROOKS! ROBBING THAT WARE-HOUSE!
WE SURE GOTTA HAND IT TO OLD FLAGG FARGO! WHAT WITH THAT HUGE CROWD OUT THERE TO SEE HIM AT THE ARENA, THERE AIN'T HARDLY A COP LEFT IN THIS WHOLE BLASTED TOWN
AJAX

BLAST IT! WHY DO I ALWAYS SEEM TO FIND MYSELF IN THIS SAME POSITION--THE POSITION OF HAVING TO EITHER STAND HERE LIKE A MORON WHILE ROTTEN MEN LOOT AND STEAL--


--OR OF SURRENDERING CONTROL OF MY BODY TO A DEMONIC APPARITION OF VENGEANCE WHO MAY RUN AMOK AT ANY TIME WHOSE ACTIONS I CAN BARELY KEEP UNDER ANY SEMBLANCE OF CONTROL
THE GHOST RIDER!!

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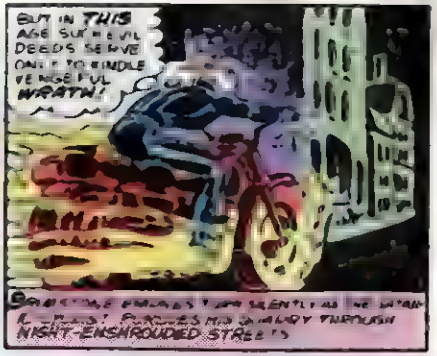

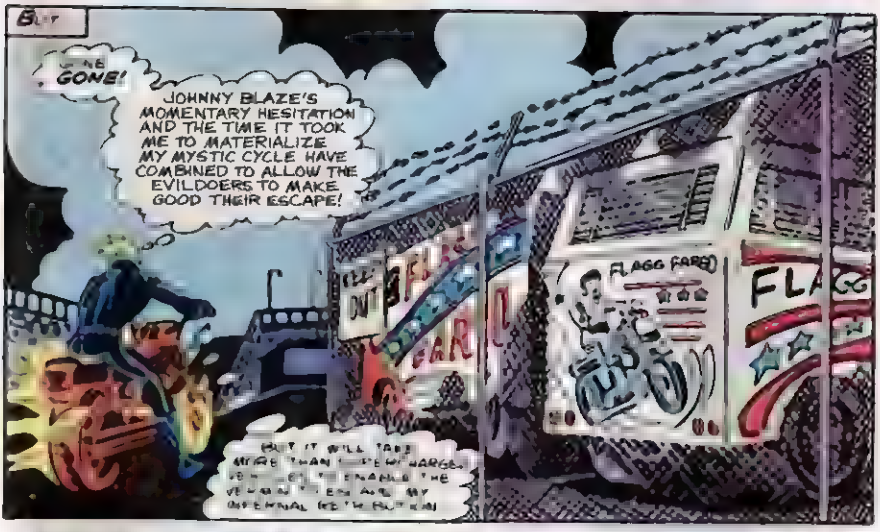
BLAZE
GONE!
JOHNNY BLAZE'S MOMENTARY HESITATION AND THE TIME IT TOOK ME TO MATERIALIZE MY MYSTIC CYCLE HAVE COMBINED TO ALLOW THE EVILDOERS TO MAKE GOOD THEIR ESCAPE!
FLAGG FARR
FLAGG FARR

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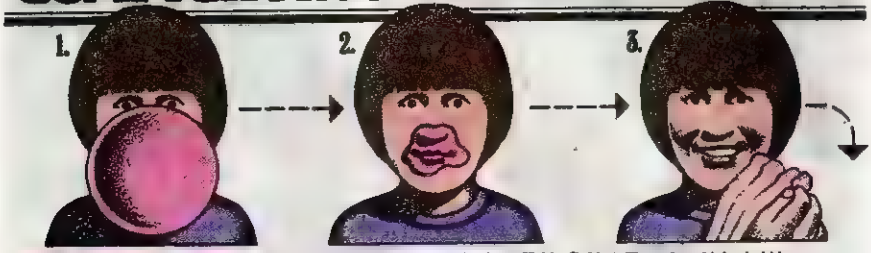
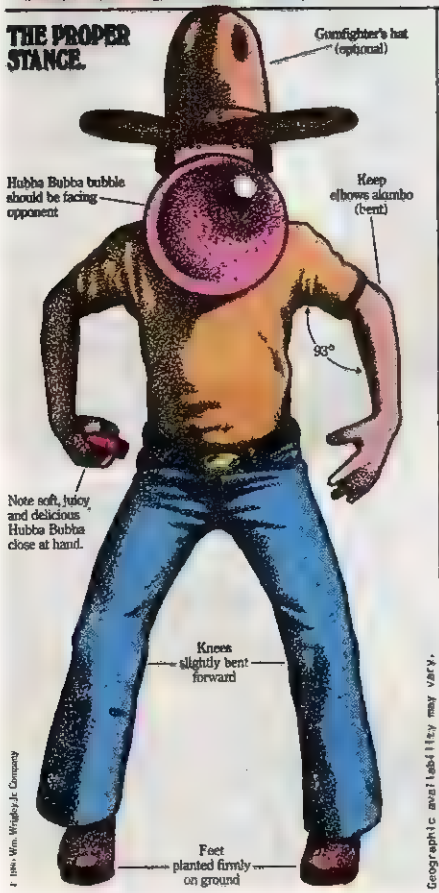
GUMFIGHTING DO'S AND DON'TS.



The first thing to do—pick the right chew: Hubba Bubba.® The soft and juicy bubble gum with amazing no-stick bubbles.™ Then proceed with this simple yet effective gumfight drill: (1) Begin blowing bubble. Note Hubba Bubba's incredibly large bubble. (2) When the Hubba Bubba bubble breaks do not be alarmed. (3) Simply remove Hubba Bubba from your face. That's right, simply remove and replace in mouth. Return to step 1. Repeat drill ten times.

THE PROPER STANCE.


Gumfighter's hat (optional)
Hubba Bubba bubble should be facing opponent
Keep elbows akimbo (bent)
90°
Note soft, juicy and delicious Hubba Bubba close at hand.
Knees slightly bent forward
Feet planted firmly on ground

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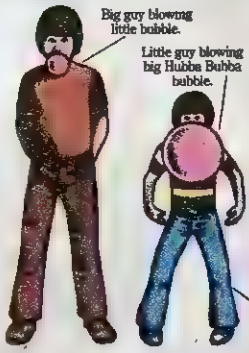
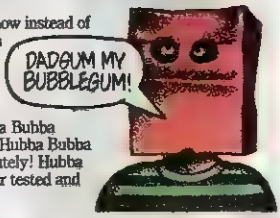


YOUR SIZE IS NOT IMPORTANT.

The size of your bubble is. And that means choosing the right bubble gum —Hubba Bubba. Because when it comes to great, big, fat bubbles, nothing sizes up to a Hubba Bubba bubble.

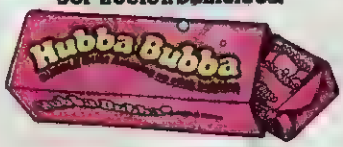
ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES.

This boy did. And now instead of wearing a smile, he's wearing a paper bag over the bubble gum stuck to his face. Definitely not soft and juicy Hubba Bubba Bubble Gum. Does Hubba Bubba really work? Absolutely! Hubba Bubba is gumfighter tested and approved.



So pick up a pack of Hubba Bubba in original or mint flavor. Enjoy that soft, juicy, delicious taste. Plus those great, big Hubba Bubba bubbles that won't stick to your face.

SOFT. JUICY. DELICIOUS.



BIG BUBBLES, NO TROUBLES.

Geographic availability may vary.

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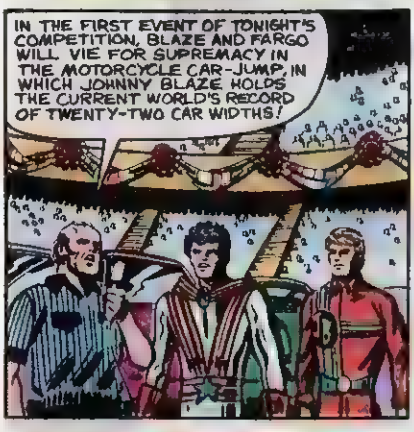
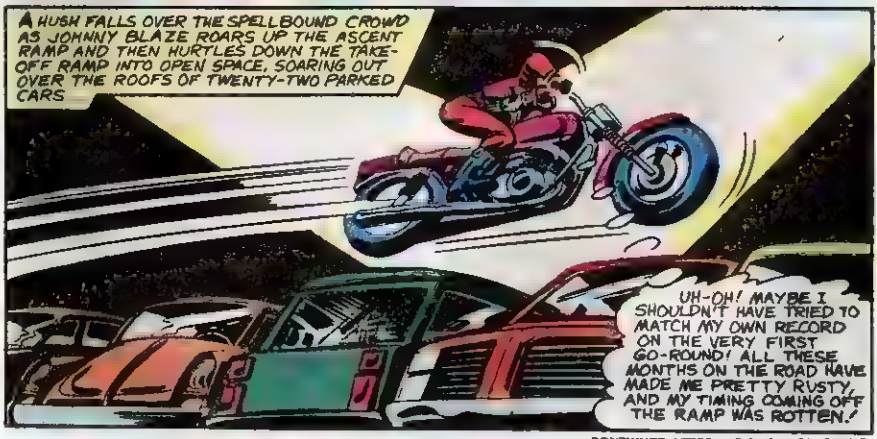
IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW, ARRANGEMENTS ARE HASTILY COMPLETED FOR A DAZZLING STUNT-CYCLE COMPETITION PITTING WORLD-RENOWNED STUNT-CYCLIST JOHNNY BLAZE AGAINST BRASH NEWCOMER FLAGG FARGO. AND FINALLY...
YOU ALL KNOW THE RULES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! THE COMPETITION WILL BE SPREAD OVER THREE SEPARATE NIGHTS AND WILL BE SCORED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POINT-SYSTEM APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN STUNT-CYCLE ASSOCIATION!


IN THE FIRST EVENT OF TONIGHT'S COMPETITION, BLAZE AND FARGO WILL VIE FOR SUPREMACY IN THE MOTORCYCLE CAR-JUMP, IN WHICH JOHNNY BLAZE HOLDS THE CURRENT WORLD'S RECORD OF TWENTY-TWO CAR WIDTHS!

THE FIRST JUMP WILL BE MADE BY...JOHNNY BLAZE!
TRY NOT TO BREAK YOUR NECK, BLAZE! I DON'T WANTA HAVE THE JUDGES AWARDIN' YOU ANY SYMPATHY POINTS!
GO SOAK YOUR HEAD, FARGO!


A HUSH FALLS OVER THE SPELLBOUND CROWD AS JOHNNY BLAZE ROARS UP THE ASCENT RAMP AND THEN HURTLES DOWN THE TAKE-OFF RAMP INTO OPEN SPACE, SOARING OUT OVER THE ROOFS OF TWENTY-TWO PARKED CARS...
UH-OH! MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIED TO MATCH MY OWN RECORD ON THE VERY FIRST GO-ROUND! ALL THESE MONTHS ON THE ROAD HAVE MADE ME PRETTY RUSTY, AND MY TIMING COMING OFF THE RAMP WAS ROTTEN!

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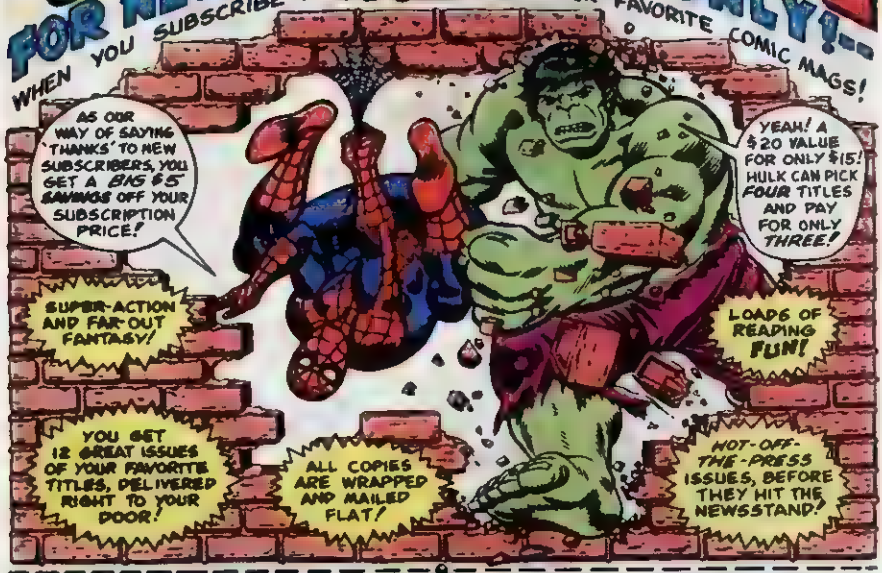
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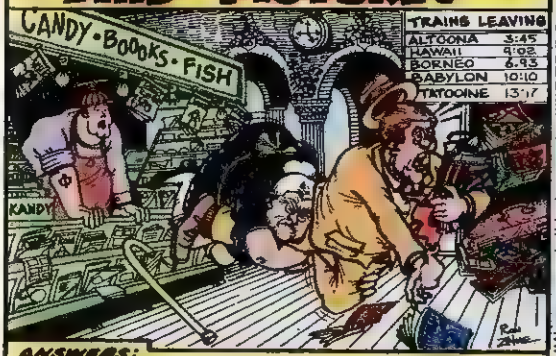

ANSWERS:

1) THE NEWSSTAND OWNER HAS AN ANCHOVY IN HIS SHIRT POCKET THAT SLID OFF HIS PIZZA AT BREAKFAST.
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3) THE OLD WOMAN'S 1923 PERFUME TURNED SOUR IN THE BOTTLE AND SMELLS LIKE EGG SALAD FLOATING IN GASOHOL.
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STILL, WITH A LITTLE LUCK, I OUGHTTA BE ABLE TO BARELY CLEAR THOSE LAST FEW CAR-WIDTHS. BUT I'VE GOT A HUNCH I'M NOT GOING TO WIN ANY BONUS POINTS FOR MY--
WHAMM!
--LANDING!!
UNGGHHH!
AN INCREDIBLE FIFTY-POINT JUMP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! JOHNNY BLAZE HAS JUST TIED HIS OWN WORLD'S RECORD OF TWENTY-TWO CAR WIDTHS!
DON'T BOTHER GETTIN' UP, BLAZE!
AFTER ALL, THE POSE YOU'RE IN NOW IS JUST PERFECT--FOR A LOSER!
NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AT FLAGG FARGO'S REQUEST, TWO ADDITIONAL CARS ARE BEING ADDED TO THE LINE-UP, MAKING A TOTAL OF TWENTY-FOUR CARS!
YES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FLAGG FARGO IS ABOUT TO ATTEMPT A NEW WORLD'S RECORD!

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AND THERE HE GOES!
UH-OH LOOKS LIKE I MAY'VE SET MYSELF UP FOR A LITTLE LESSON IN HUMILITY!
FARGO'S GOOD! REAL GOOD! AND HIS TIMING ON THE DESCENT WAS SPLIT-SECOND PERFECT!
INDEED..
A PERFECT LANDING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! FLAGG FARGO HAS JUST SET A NEW WORLD'S RECORD--
--GIVING HIM A SCORE OF 100 POINTS TO JOHNNY BLAZE'S 50!
100
50
100
DON'T TAKE IT TOO HARD, BLAZE! I THINK YOU'RE DOIN' REAL WELL--
--FOR A HAS-BEEN!
WHY, YOU LOUD-MOUTHED--!
GENTLEMEN! GENTLEMEN! PLEASE!
UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOR SIMPLY WILL NOT DO! NOW PLEASE, GENTLEMEN! GO GET YOUR CYCLES FOR THE NEXT EVENT!
YEAH, BLAZE! YOU WANTA SHOW EVERYBODY WHAT A HOTSHOT YOU ARE, SHOW 'EM ON YOUR CYCLE!

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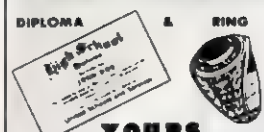
HIGH SCHOOL

DIPLOMA & RING



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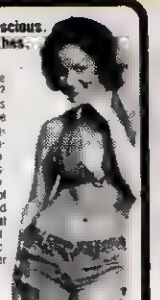

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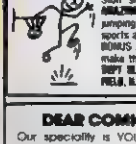

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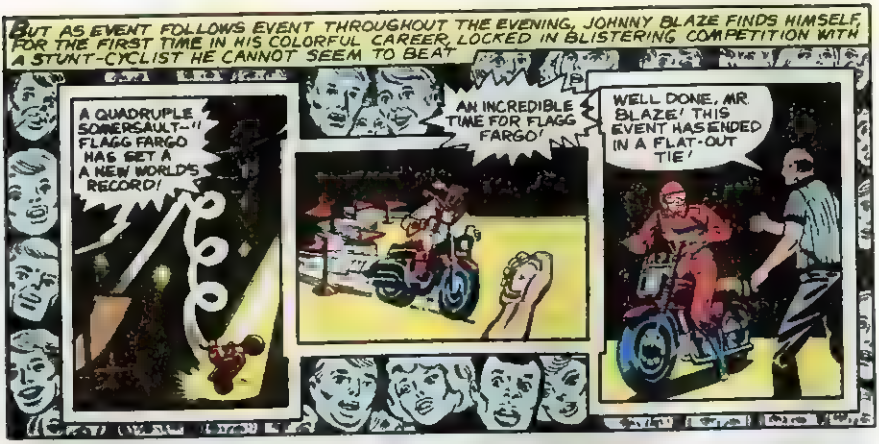
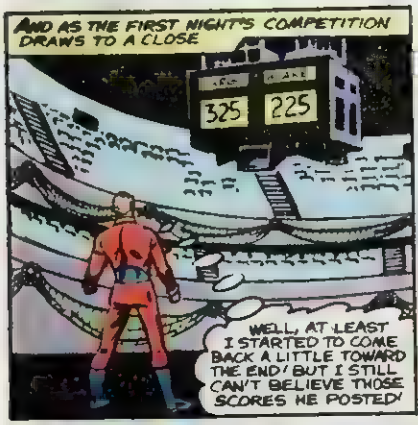
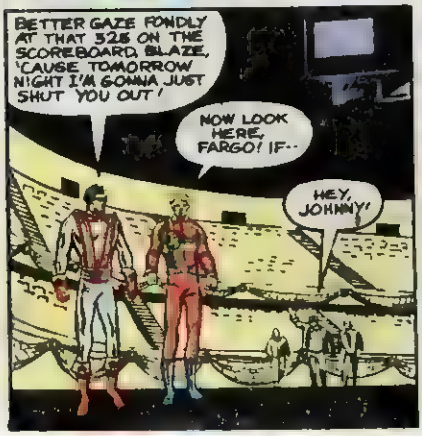
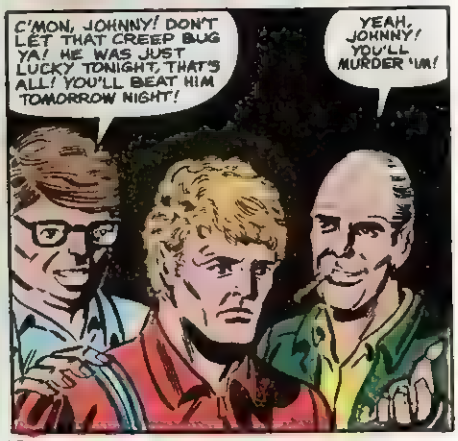

BUT AS EVENT FOLLOWS EVENT THROUGHOUT THE EVENING, JOHNNY BLAZE FINDS HIMSELF, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS COLORFUL CAREER, LOCKED IN BLISTERING COMPETITION WITH A STUNT-CYCLIST HE CANNOT SEEM TO BEAT
A QUADRUPLE SOMERSAULT--!! FLAGG FARGO HAS SET A NEW WORLD'S RECORD!
AN INCREDIBLE TIME FOR FLAGG FARGO!
WELL DONE, MR. BLAZE! THIS EVENT HAS ENDED IN A FLAT-OUT TIE!


AND AS THE FIRST NIGHT'S COMPETITION DRAWS TO A CLOSE
325
225
WELL, AT LEAST I STARTED TO COME BACK A LITTLE TOWARD THE END! BUT I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE SCORES HE POSTED!


BETTER GAZE FONDLY AT THAT 325 ON THE SCOREBOARD, BLAZE, 'CAUSE TOMORROW NIGHT I'M GONNA JUST SHUT YOU OUT!
NOW LOOK HERE, FARGO! IF--
HEY, JOHNNY!


C'MON, JOHNNY! DON'T LET THAT CREEP BUG YA! HE WAS JUST LUCKY TONIGHT, THAT'S ALL! YOU'LL BEAT HIM TOMORROW NIGHT!
YEAH, JOHNNY! YOU'LL MURDER 'IM!

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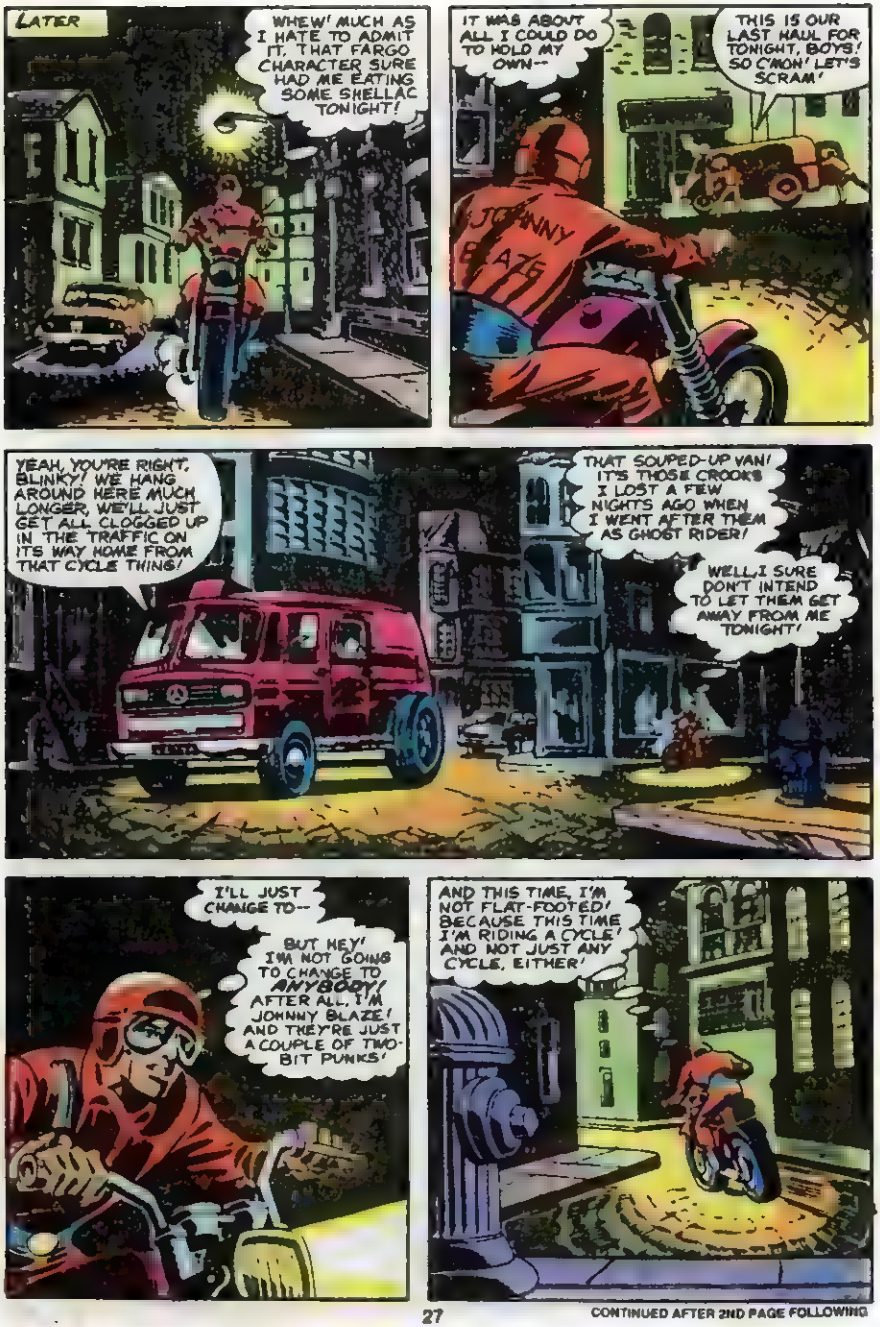
LATER
WHEW! MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT, THAT FARGO CHARACTER SURE HAD ME EATING SOME SHELLAC TONIGHT!
IT WAS ABOUT ALL I COULD DO TO HOLD MY OWN--
THIS IS OUR LAST HAUL FOR TONIGHT, BOYS! SO C'MON! LET'S SCRAM!
JOHNNY BLAZE
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT, BLINKY! WE HANG AROUND HERE MUCH LONGER, WE'LL JUST GET ALL CLOGGED UP IN THE TRAFFIC ON ITS WAY HOME FROM THAT CYCLE THING!
THAT SOUPED-UP VAN! IT'S THOSE CROOKS I LOST A FEW NIGHTS AGO WHEN I WENT AFTER THEM AS GHOST RIDER!
WELL, I SURE DON'T INTEND TO LET THEM GET AWAY FROM ME TONIGHT!
I'LL JUST CHANGE TO--
BUT HEY! I'M NOT GOING TO CHANGE TO ANYBODY! AFTER ALL, I'M JOHNNY BLAZE! AND THEY'RE JUST A COUPLE OF TWO-BIT PUNKS!
AND THIS TIME, I'M NOT FLAT-FOOTED! BECAUSE THIS TIME I'M RIDING A CYCLE! AND NOT JUST ANY CYCLE, EITHER!

CONTINUED AFTER 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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BULLPEN BULLETINS

Unless you've been mai

Our new, higher-price tions like the mind-staggering EPIC, and the now-classic WARRIORS OF THE SHADOW REALM have taken all of fandom by storm. The big-budget SILVER SURFER movie project is barreling along smooth as silk, as are our reany animated car- for Saturday morning no need to mention

pr

Now, the punch line! The point of ll this valorous verbiage is to set nds at ease, once and for all y people have asked me, ices quivering with care and concern, "Does this mean that Marvel is losing interest in its own lovable line of regular color comics? Does mean the monthly 40¢ mags are less important than they used to be? Does this mean you guys'll just be concentrating on the big, bombshell type spectaculars and forget about the good ol' line of super heroes that made you famous?"

The answer, of course, is a deafening, resounding, thundrous NO! Just for the record, we want all of

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way it's always been — and take it from me, good buddy, that's the way it's gonna stay!

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confusion of Mig

motion P

the *real* reason

to Cap to stop one of Spider- n's earliest foes — *A Guy*

All-Father Odin!
MICRONAUTS #18 — Trapped in a mysterious house, the Micronauts are attacked by strange forces!
GHOST RIDER #45 — "The Ghost Rider No More!"
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Hulk's odyssey in Jarella's sub- atomic world continues.

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Zonia! A Marvel classic!

Shroud be

Dancen Macabre?

N #

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e ever... Luke Sk ightsaber with Da
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D. aleb Hammer!
URY #158 — Proudly we re t: "The Basic Training of

'What If the Invis- ned the Sub

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YOU'LL BE TIED UP FOR A WHILE, LIL. THANKS TO HOSTESS TWINKIES CAKES, THE TABLES-- OR SHOULD I SAY, WEBS-- HAVE BEEN TURNED!
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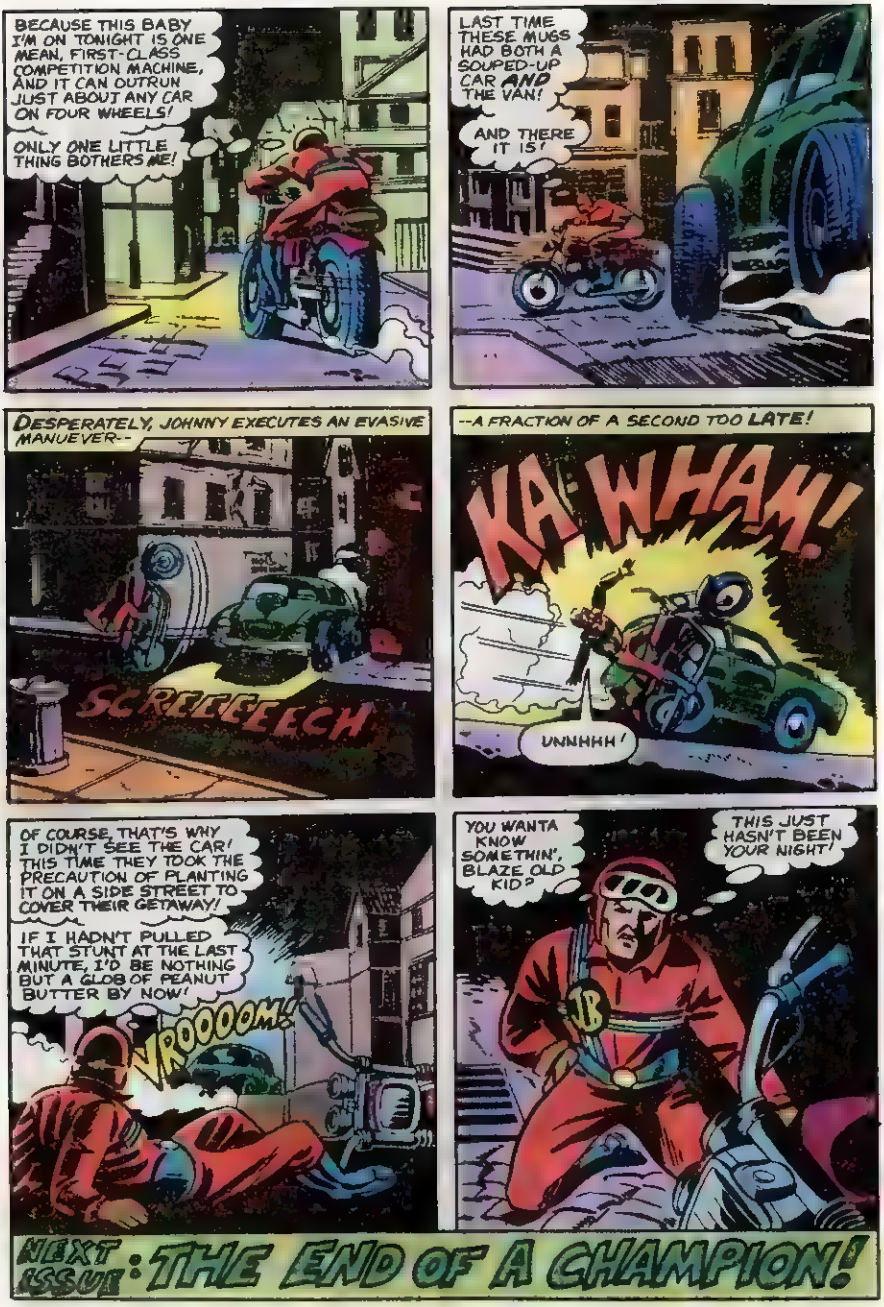
BECAUSE THIS BABY I'M ON TONIGHT IS ONE MEAN, FIRST-CLASS COMPETITION MACHINE, AND IT CAN OUTRUN JUST ABOUT ANY CAR ON FOUR WHEELS!
ONLY ONE LITTLE THING BOTHERS ME!
LAST TIME THESE MUGS HAD BOTH A SOUPED-UP CAR AND THE VAN!
AND THERE IT IS!
DESPERATELY, JOHNNY EXECUTES AN EVASIVE MANUEVER--
SCREEEEECH
--A FRACTION OF A SECOND TOO LATE!
KA-WHAM!
UNNHHH!
OF COURSE THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T SEE THE CAR! THIS TIME THEY TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF PLANTING IT ON A SIDE STREET TO COVER THEIR GETAWAY!
IF I HADN'T PULLED THAT STUNT AT THE LAST MINUTE, I'D BE NOTHING BUT A GLOB OF PEANUT BUTTER BY NOW!
VROOOOM!
YOU WANTA KNOW SOMETHIN', BLAZE OLD KID?
THIS JUST HASN'T BEEN YOUR NIGHT!
JB
NEXT ISSUE: THE END OF A CHAMPION!

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GHOST WRITERS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
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DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR
MARK GRUENWALD
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Mike & Don,

During the 1940s, Boris Karloff thrived on portrayals of mild-mannered men of science who were driven to violent extremes by a series of unfortunate circumstances, usually compounded by a death in the family. Habitually, such stories culminated in a bizarrely ironic ending... exactly like the contents of GHOST RIDER #40.

I savored every minute of reading "The Menace of the Nuclear Man," just as I savored those old movies. (Karloff has always been, and will likely always be, my favorite horror star.)

I keep mentioning Karloff, because Don Perlin perfectly captured his eerie gauntness in the person of Dr. Thurgood Vance. And, in the Nuclear Man, he showed us a different kind of Frankenstein monster.

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset Street
Scranton, PA 18509

Dear Mike,

It was high time that GHOST RIDER went monthly, and you certainly did it with style. "The Menace of the Nuclear Man" was quite a follow-up to the Three Mile Island incident, though I think the cover-blurbed "Death in the Nuclear Family" would have been a better title.

Johnny Blaze and the Ghost Rider have gone through some wild changes in the past few months. It seems that they are all but at war with each other. I can't wait to see how you'll resolve this conflict!

Charles Haskell
15 West 139th Street
New York, NY 10037

Dear Ghost Writers:

Making GHOST RIDER a monthly comic is about the best thing you could have done. (Now, if only DAREDEVIL could go monthly...)

Mike's stories have been great, and Don Perlin's artwork never ceases to amaze me. Sometimes it looks like Sal Buscema has actually sat in and "ghosted" for Don.., it's that good. And, of course, the covers by the two Bobs — Budlansky and Wiacek — have been fantastic.

There's just one thing I want to know... Is Beppo Sabatini someone you made up or what?

Oh, well, keep up the good work!

Dan Leikkari
304 South Leland Avenue
Thunder Bay, Ontario
Canada P7E 2N7

Oh, Dan... do you think that we, even in our wildest moments could have fabricated someone with the verve and drive of a Beppo Sabatini? Hmmm... come to think of it, we could have! (After all, this *is* the House of Ideas!) However, in answer to dozens of letters that keep trickling into the Bullpen mail-bag, we must truthfully state:

Yes, there is a Beppo Sabatini! At least, to the best of our knowledge there is. (Now watch it turn out that Beppo is really just Ed Vla using a pseudonym!)

The ball's in your court now, Beppo! —R.S.

Dear Ghost Writers,

GHOST RIDER #40 was another goodie. The Nuclear Man yarn was an interesting extrapolation of how a man obsessed with stopping one evil can commit a greater evil himself. And, at the same you managed to produce a scenario that neither condemned nor condoned the use of nuclear power.

I particularly like the evolving subplot about Johnny Blaze and his growing reluctance to become the Ghost Rider. Johnny's troubled, disjointed thoughts after each transformation and the separation of him from his demonic identity are very interesting. Nowhere is there a better contrast than in the opening; after the Ghost Rider has just played a game of high speed "chicken" with an express train, Johnny Blaze tries to run across the road and is hit by a car. What irony!

Artwise, the scene that most fascinated me this issue was the sequence concerning Thurgood's deformed grandchild. That first panel on page six, depicting Johnny's look of pure horror at the unseen picture of the baby was great. With the mood created by the lightning in the background, and the lighting of the stark, lonely children's toys in the foreground, we didn't need to see that child.

Betsy Kay Jacobs
6829 Mitchell Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63139

Dear Mike,

Given the time lags inherent in writing comics, GHOST RIDER #40 must have been written fairly soon after the dreadful Three Mile Island incident. Thus, it's understandable that "The Menace of the Nuclear Man" seems rushed and ill-conceived.

This story had two coincidences which stretched this overused dramatic device to its limit. First, there was the chance meeting with Dr. Vance, who just happened to have this nuclear suit. Okay, but then we have Johnny conveniently on hand when the gangsters break in... too conveniently.

But, beyond the coincidences, the main problem with this story was that Thurgood Vance was so obviously a paper tiger. What little character motivations and actions he was given were hackneyed at best. And, again, the Ghost Rider's actions were not entirely in character. In addition, the art was worse than usual — with the exception of pages 1, 2, and 27.

However, I am optimistic that this issue was just a fluke, and that your recent quality will not suffer as a result of your deserved promotion to monthly status.

Matt Maple
Toronto, Ontario

Well, thanks at least for the vote of confidence, Matt.

The above two letters are a good example of why editors turn gray. Betsy Kay Jacobs loved the ironies and the motivations in the story; Mr. Maple didn't think there were any. It's all a matter of perceptions, of course... you pay your money and you take your choice.

And then, there are readers who don't waste words...

—R.S.

Dear Ghost People,

Re: Issue #40... I liked it.

John Merrill
Blaine Road
Hallowell, ME 04347

Be that as it may, folks, we'd just like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the outpouring of support that has made GHOST RIDER Marvel's *new* Number One Fear Comic. Without you, we never could have gone monthly. Your letters — pro, con, and otherwise — have helped shape the adventures of Johnny Blaze and his fiery-skulled alter ego. We've said it many times, but it's still very, very true: you are the ultimate editors. And we think you're doing a pretty good job. Thanks! —Roger Stern

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IT'S O.J. SIMPSON BREAKING OFF TACKLE! HE'S AT THE 40, THE 30. HE'S GOING ALL THE WAY. IT'S A TOUCH DOWN!
LATER ... IN THE LOCKER ROOM
WOW! O.J. SIMPSON! LET'S GET HIS AUTOGRAPH!
AW, A SUPERSTAR LIKE HIM WOULDN'T NOTICE US...
HEY! WITH THOSE DINGO BOOTS, YOU GUYS LOOK LIKE SUPERSTARS!
O.J.! HOW'D YOU KNOW WE WERE WEARING DINGO'S?
MAN, IT'S EASY! NOBODY PUTS LEATHER TOGETHER LIKE DINGO! I WEAR DINGO'S MYSELF!
YOU WEAR DINGO'S, O.J.!
SURE! I'VE GOT TO PUT SOMETHING SPECIAL ON MY FEET AFTER A GREAT GAME.
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